



ПОСОЛЬСТВО  
СОЮЗА СОВЕТСКИХ  
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК

СВ. 242

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime-Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

221  
20 February 1990

Dear Prime Minister,

Please find enclosed a synopsis of the latest Soviet proposals on the Afghan settlement, which I hope might be of interest to you.

Yours sincerely,

*L. Zamyatin*

L. Zamyatin  
USSR Ambassador

## SOVIET POSITION ON THE AFGHAN SETTLEMENT

(Latest proposals)

Indeed, the situation in and around that country remains a difficult one. But the Soviet Government firmly believes that a year since the Soviet withdrawal there are grounds to state that the prerequisites have emerged for putting the process of political settlement in Afghanistan on practical lines.

That is why on February 15th the Soviet Government, after consultations with the Afghan Government, put forward a comprehensive set of ideas on the settlement in Afghanistan.

First, a broad dialogue with the participation of all political forces operating in Afghanistan and beyond its borders is of paramount importance to the settlement.

The opening of an inter-Afghan dialogue meets with considerable difficulties. We believe that the involvement in this process, as early as at the preparatory stage, of the United Nations Organisation which has vast authority and experience of such work, would be important for overcoming these difficulties.

Second, appropriate conditions should be created for an Afghan dialogue. Most importantly, the fighting must stop.

Third, the nuts and bolts of the Afghan settlement will be the focus of the Afghan dialogue. It could be held in the form of an Afghan peace conference which could be convened in Afghanistan or in any third country upon the arrangement among its participants.

Fourth, the Afghans themselves must work out a mechanism for the internal settlement.

Fifth, during the period of transition, which would begin from the convocation of an all-Afghan peace conference and conclude in the election of a broad-based government, the warring sides could preserve the territorial status-quo currently held by them.

In other words, the question of joint armed forces and of the joint administration for the whole territory of the country would be put off until the creation of a broad-based Afghan government.

All this, certainly, does not preclude the possibility of other versions. Much will depend on the atmosphere at the conference and attitudes of its participants.

Sixth, if the Afghan negotiating parties announced that they pledge to recognise the results of the general elections and will not try to change them by force, it would certainly promote the all-Afghan dialogue and strengthen their mutual trust. President Najibullah of Afghanistan has already pledged this.

Effective international control not only by the United Nations Organisation, but also by other organisations, for example the Islamic Conference, should take place. The Non-Aligned Movement, of which Afghanistan is an active member, could also play an important part in it.

Such are the internal aspects of the settlement.

The specific character of the development of the situation in Afghanistan and around it, as well as the very emergence of the Afghan question, are connected with a certain degree of involvement in it on various stages of a number of countries, primarily the United States, Pakistan, Iran and the USSR. The reaching of mutual understanding between these countries on the main aspects of the political settlement of the Afghan problem seems to be more and more necessary.

With due account for these preliminary observations, I shall again set forth our proposals, and, to make the picture more complete, I shall continue the numbering.

Seventh, in light of the importance of forming a consensus between the Soviet Union, the United States, Pakistan and Iran, we propose a conference of these four countries with the participation of the UN Secretary-General or its representatives.

It could be held in Geneva, Rome or Vienna. We know about the difficulties Iran could face because of its difficult relations with the US. That is why the Soviet side proposes to act as a mediator.

Eighth, it is clear, however, that the conference would not be valid without the participating of warring parties - both the Republic of Afghanistan and the various groups opposing it.

For this reason it would be worthwhile to set up a working group of experts for preparing the conference, for the purpose of determining the participants and the agenda and settling organisational problems.

Ninth, one of the key issues on which it would be desirable to reach international consensus is the complete termination of all arms deliveries to the warring parties in Afghanistan, no matter where they come from, along with announcing a break or suspension of hostilities.

There is one more thing. In order to support measures to fully stop arms deliveries, it would be reasonable to discuss the removal from Afghanistan of all weapons' stockpiles and not to deliver them to that country in the future.

Tenth, the termination of arms deliveries would be the first step towards the demilitarisation of Afghanistan. An international conference could consolidate the status of Afghanistan as a neutral and demilitarised country.

There seems to be no need to point out that the USSR does not regard these ideas as the only possible platform for the settlement of the Afghan problem.

Noteworthy are the latest proposals to advance the settlement put forward by President Najibullah a few days ago. He suggested that an all-Afghan meeting (a shura) be held in Kabul, Jelalabad or Kandahar. The UN Secretary-General's representative could act as an observer at that meeting. All Afghan political parties and groups could participate in this conference.

The Afghan Government has also proposed to send negotiating teams to Peshawar and Tehran made up of well-known Afghans not associated with the PDPA or the Government to meet the opposition and seek out ways of bringing the settlement forward.

The Soviet Government supports these ideas, viewing them as potentially capable of starting the inter-Afghan dialogue.

After all it is up to the Afghans to resolve their differences. As to the Soviet Union - it will render its assistance to all constructive moves towards peace in Afghanistan.



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СОЮЗА СОВЕТСКИХ  
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК

Mr. C. Powell  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

20 February 1990

сф  
СОД/2

Dear Mr. Powell,

Please find enclosed the full text of the article by  
Mr. E. Shevardnadze on the USSR position on Afghanistan,  
which I hope will be of interest to you.

Yours sincerely,

*L. Zamyatin*

L. Zamyatin  
USSR Ambassador



# THE USSR EMBASSY

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Eduard Shevardnadze's article in Izvestia

**Moscow February 14 TASS -- Here follows the full text of an article by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, published in Izvestia today:**

The last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan a year ago, on February 15. It is no exaggeration to say that this event was close to the hearts of all Soviet people. They waited for it impatiently, discussed it and took it to heart.

There is no denying the fact that before the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan many people both at home and abroad could not be sure of their attitude toward the goals of perestroika. We passed this trial of political responsibility, as we did the exams that followed. The second Congress of USSR People's Deputies gave a courageous and honest assessment of the decision, taken in December 1979, to send troops into Afghanistan.

The leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan passed the exam with flying colours. It proved, in very difficult conditions, that its platform enjoys the broad support of the Afghan people. It began the quest for a political solution to the Afghan problem on a local basis.

In terms of the Soviet troop withdrawal, it is worth analysing the internal aspect of the event and its place in the general context of Soviet perestroika. When taking to the path of perestroika, we could not overlook the fact that Soviet troops were fighting in Afghanistan, that the blood of Soviet soldiers was being spilled there.

The way to the withdrawal of our troops was not easy. It was easier to get involved in the Afghan conflict than to get out of it. The situation created a number of intertwined conflicts that were fraught with far-reaching upheavals. We had to settle them quickly. We sharply intensified the Geneva negotiations and sustained a

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difficult diplomatic struggle. It was crowned with the signing of the Geneva Accords on April 14, 1988, after which we could begin to withdraw our troops.

30 When this is all over, we must give their due both to the signatories of the history-making international accords on Afghanistan and to all those who promoted them. I should like to make special mention of India, which has invariably acted in a constructive way and made a substantial contribution to the overall efforts.

The stand of the People's Republic of China also deserves mention. As a neighbouring country, it played an important part in maintaining a proper atmosphere around the talks. And, of course, the accords would have been virtually impossible without Iran's constructive stand.

40 It is natural that this crucial event made a strong impact both on the domestic and international situation. Speaking at the 19th Party Conference, Mikhail Gorbachev said that "the Geneva Accords became an important landmark in the political settlement of regional conflicts, which are endangering universal peace and hampering the progress of nations."

The breakthrough in the settlement of the Afghan problem convincingly showed that new political thinking in international affairs meant, among other things, practical actions aimed at strengthening trust between states and peoples and at settling the most complicated situations. The Afghan precedent definitely accelerated the termination of the Iran-Iraq war, the settlement of the Namibian problem and the consolidation of the movement to find mutually acceptable, compromise solutions in South-East Asia and Central America.

50 Much depends on the position of Pakistan and Iran which border on Afghanistan. Pakistan seems to be slowly and with great difficulty reassessing values and bringing its policy in line with Afghan realities. In general Iran is conducting a constructive policy. In particular, it stresses the role that countries of the region can play in the Afghan settlement.

Even the opposition is waking up to the inevitability of solving the internal Afghan problem through a dialogue that involves the entire range of Afghan political forces. This encompasses wide circles of the opposition, from field commanders to the moderate leaders of the "seven-party alliance."

Thus there are all grounds to state that the prerequisites have emerged for putting the process of attaining national reconciliation and a political settlement in Afghanistan on practical lines.



60 We are not indifferent to the fate of Afghanistan and the Afghan people. I think this is obvious. This country is our neighbour, a traditional and close partner. It was and will remain so. Therefore there is nothing strange in the fact that, having withdrawn troops, we are far from being indifferent to how Afghan affairs develop: will the desire for peace and accord triumph or will this courageous and wise people be doomed to endless bloody strife.

It is general knowledge that we have our own vision of the optimal model for a peaceful Afghan settlement which we elaborated through close consultations with the government in Kabul, while maintaining contacts with other forces of Afghan society.

70 The main thing now is not to let slip a chance of launching a full-scale inter-Afghan political dialogue. Nobody doubts that there is now such a chance. Just as most other regional conflicts, the Afghan problem has two aspects -- domestic and foreign.

With all the nuances characteristic of the Afghan question, the domestic aspect is undoubtedly the priority. And this is understandable: no one can decide Afghans' affairs for them.

However, there is no denying that those who got involved in the Afghan events in one way or another are obliged to help Afghans achieve accord. They should offer help, and should not implant their own recipes and, what is more, should not attach preliminary conditions.

80 We believe that there are the following stages on the way to Afghan settlement and this opinion is shared by leaders of the Republic of Afghanistan.

**First**, a broad dialogue with the participation of all political forces operating in Afghanistan and beyond its borders is of paramount importance to the settlement. This applies, above all, to the forces who treasure national interests and who want a fratricidal war to end as soon as possible.

And if most such groups decide to begin an inter-Afghan dialogue, an initial and the most important practical step towards the solution of the Afghan problem will be taken.

90 The opening of an inter-Afghan dialogue meets with considerable difficulties. We believe that the involvement in this process, as early as at the preparatory stage, of the United Nations Organisation which has vast authority and experience of such work, would be important for overcoming these difficulties.

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**Second**, appropriate conditions should be created for an Afghan dialogue. Most importantly, the fighting must stop.

We understand that, most probably, it would be impossible to agree immediately on the complete ending of the war which, even counted formally, has been lasting for eleven years, and actually even longer. Therefore, at the initial stage, it would be expedient to press for a ceasefire.

100 **Third**, the nuts and bolts of the Afghan settlement will be the focus of the Afghan dialogue. It could be held in the form of an Afghan peace conference which could be convened in Afghanistan or in any third country upon the arrangement among its participants.

**Fourth**, the Afghans themselves must work out a mechanism for the internal settlement. We believe a solid basis could be provided by the plan advanced by Afghanistan's president at the ninth Non-Aligned Summit Conference in Belgrade. The plan outlines the basic stages of settlement and envisages filling them with specific contents. What is particularly valuable in present conditions is that it is flexible and opens room for proposals.

110 **Fifth**, the concept of a period of transition could involve the preservation of the territorial status quo between the factions participating in the dialogue. The period of transition would be the period beginning from the convocation of an all-Afghan peace conference and concluding in the election of a broad-based government.

In other words, the question of joint armed forces and of the joint administration for the whole territory of the country would be put off until the creation of a broad-based Afghan government.

All this, certainly, does not preclude the possibility of other versions. Much will depend on the atmosphere at the conference and attitudes of its participants.

120 **Sixth**, if the Afghan negotiating parties announced that they pledge to recognise the results of the general elections and will not try to change them by force, it would certainly promote the all-Afghan dialogue and strengthen their mutual trust. As for President Najibullah of Afghanistan, he has already pledged this at a meeting with journalists in Kabul on January 24, 1990.

There is one more important thing about the elections which should draw a line under military confrontation. The existing experience of the settlement of regional conflicts, specifically, in Namibia and Nicaragua, shows that effective international

control to make them really free and democratic is very important for the organisation of such elections.

130 So far as Afghanistan is concerned, not only the United Nations Organisation, but also other organisations, for example the Islamic Conference, could act as observers. The Non-Aligned Movement, of which Afghanistan is an active member, could also play an important part in it.

Such are the internal aspects of the settlement. It is difficult to separate internal aspects from external in a situation like the one existing in Afghanistan, for example, in the problem of elections under international control. However, since we agreed to separate them, although in a somewhat artificial way, I should like to set forth our view of the second group of issues.

140 The specific character of the development of the situation in Afghanistan and around it, as well as the very emergence of the Afghan question, are connected with a certain degree of involvement in it on various stages of a number of countries, primarily the United States, Pakistan, Iran and the USSR. The signing of the Geneva Accords provided a legal basis for the responsibility of the USSR and the US As guarantors of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The most important thing is that Pakistan should take measures to stop this interference from Pakistani territory, that Pakistani side should live up to its commitments. The reaching of mutual understanding by the USSR, the US, Pakistan and Iran on the main aspects of the political settlement of the Afghan problem seems to be more and more necessary.

With due account for these preliminary observations, I shall again set forth our proposals, and, to make the picture more complete, I shall continue the numbering.

150 **Seventh**, in light of the importance of forming a consensus between the Soviet Union, the United States, Pakistan and Iran, we propose a conference of these four countries with the participation of the UN Secretary-General or its representatives.

It could be held in Geneva, Rome or Vienna. We know about the difficulties Iran could face because of its difficult relations with the US This is why the Soviet side proposes to act as a mediator.

**Eighth**, it is clear, however, that the conference would not be valid without the participation of warring parties -- both the Republic of Afghanistan and the various groups opposing it.

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160 For this reason it would be worthwhile to set up a working group of experts for preparing the conference, for the purpose of determining the participants and the agenda and settling organisational problems.

**Ninth**, one of the key issues on which it would be desirable to reach international consensus is the complete termination of all arms deliveries to the warring parties in Afghanistan, no matter where they come from, along with announcing a break or suspension of hostilities.

We have spoken about it with the US Side on more than one occasion, because we have believed and continue to believe that only this comprehensive approach can really bring closer the termination of the bloodshed in Afghanistan.

170 There is one more thing. In order to support measures to fully stop arms deliveries, it would be reasonable to discuss the removal from Afghanistan of all weapons' stockpiles' and not to deliver them to that country in the future.

**Tenth**, the termination of arms deliveries would be the first step towards the demilitarisation of Afghanistan. An international conference could consolidate the status of Afghanistan as a neutral and demilitarised country. The USSR would be ready to take parts, including the material aspect, in the creation of an international mechanism which would monitor demilitarisation of Afghanistan on all stages.

180 There seems to be no need to point out that the USSR does not regard these ideas as the only possible platform for the settlement of the Afghan problem. We are sure, however, that their putting into practice would really give a start to the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan. We hope for a constructive response from those on whom progress in the Afghan settlement depends.

We also count on the support of the UN Secretary-General. This would be fully in line with the mandate given to him by the General Assembly. We are deeply convinced that the UN has far from exhausted its considerable potential for ensuring a most-favoured treatment for the Afghan settlement.

190 On our part, we are ready for constructive exchange of views with the US, Pakistan and Iran on all aspects of the Afghan settlement, including practical steps to ensure its progress. The Soviet side does not refuse to take part in a dialogue with field commanders, leaders of Peshawar and other groups on the understanding that such contacts will not be interpreted in a wrong way, as our recognition of the "transitional government." We are also open for talks with Zahir Shah, his associates, with all those who would like to help settle the Afghan problem.

There is one more humanitarian issue which is of tremendous importance to us: the release of our soldiers captured by Afghan opposition forces. The Soviet government and the Soviet people in general cannot but be concerned over the destiny of our compatriots who are still in captivity a year after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

200 The USSR Foreign Ministry will not believe that it has fulfilled its mission until all our soldiers are set free and join their families. We regard it as our sacred duty and direct professional responsibility.

Life and memory are inseparable. Dates such as this anniversary invariably provoke people to analyse the past and to take actions directed towards the future. This is what we are going to do.

The Soviet Union is eager and determined to do its utmost for neighbouring Afghanistan to become again a peaceful, non-aligned country friendly to all nations, for this painful period in its history full of internicine strife to be over, never to return.

**\*\* Ends \*\***

## SOVIET POSITION ON THE AFGHAN SETTLEMENT

(Latest proposals)

Indeed, the situation in and around that country remains a difficult one. But the Soviet Government firmly believes that a year since the Soviet withdrawal there are grounds to state that the prerequisites have emerged for putting the process of political settlement in Afghanistan on practical lines.

That is why on February 15th the Soviet Government, after consultations with the Afghan Government, put forward a comprehensive set of ideas on the settlement in Afghanistan.

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The opening of an inter-Afghan dialogue meets with considerable difficulties. We believe that the involvement in this process, as early as at the preparatory stage, of the United Nations Organisation which has vast authority and experience of such work, would be important for overcoming these difficulties.

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Such are the internal aspects of the settlement.

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It could be held in Geneva, Rome or Vienna. We know about the difficulties Iran could face because of its difficult relations with the US. That is why the Soviet side proposes to act as a mediator.

Eighth, it is clear, however, that the conference would not be valid without the participating of warring parties - both the Republic of Afghanistan and the various groups opposing it.

For this reason it would be worthwhile to set up a working group of experts for preparing the conference, for the purpose of determining the participants and the agenda and settling organisational problems.

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There is one more thing. In order to support measures to fully stop arms deliveries, it would be reasonable to discuss the removal from Afghanistan of all weapons' stockpiles and not to deliver them to that country in the future.

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Noteworthy are the latest proposals to advance the settlement put forward by President Najibullah a few days ago. He suggested that an all-Afghan meeting (a shura) be held in Kabul, Jelalabad or Kandahar. The UN Secretary-General's representative could act as an observer at that meeting. All Afghan political parties and groups could participate in this conference.



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The Soviet Government supports these ideas, viewing them as potentially capable of starting the inter-Afghan dialogue.

After all it is up to the Afghans to resolve their differences. As to the Soviet Union - it will render its assistance to all constructive moves towards peace in Afghanistan.